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Elgar and the City: The Cockaigne Overture and Contributions of Modernity

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Figure 1. Title page of Cockaigne (London: Boosey and Hawkes, c. 1901). © The British Library Board, h.3930.d.(1.). Reproduced by permission.

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TITLE PAGE

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Elgar and the city

Few pieces in Elgar's *œuvre* are considered as unproblematic as his 1901 concert overture, *Cockaigne (In London Town)*. A sonata form movement with an episodic development (see Figure 1 for a thematic analysis of the work), it is not explicitly programmatic; but, from the time of its composition, certain themes and episodes have become associated with particular non-musical images, and thus one can discern a narrative of sorts.¹ The opening theme (Example 1(i)), often perceived as an expression of the bustling city of London itself, quickly gives way to a *nobilmente* theme (Example 1(ii)) that first came to Elgar "one dark day in the Guildhall: looking at the memorials of the city's great past & knowing full well the history of its unending charity, I seemed to hear far away in the dim roof a theme, an echo of some noble melody."² Following this "citizen" theme (as Edwin Evans described it in his analysis of the work in the 1942 Hawkes pocket score), the music returns to the opening material to end the first subject group.³ The key and mood then change, and we hear a *cantabile* second subject in E-flat major, "commonly associated with a pair of lovers in a London park" (Example 1(iii)).⁴ The exposition closes with a diminution of the "citizen" theme, generally held to represent a cheeky cockney (Example 1(iv)), and a further reprise of the city theme. The development begins with a *pianissimo* rendition of the citizen theme, followed by a series of episodes: a military band marches by with a new theme, heard first faintly and then *fortissimo* (Example 1(v)); an off-key echo of that march is then heard as if depicting a Salvation Army band; and an episode in a church follows, in which new material is combined with phrases from both the cockney and lovers' themes. The recapitulation includes a reprise in the tonic not only of the lovers' theme but also of the military march.

A short coda, consisting of the citizen theme (in E-flat major) and the city theme for five final measures (in C), brings the piece to a close.

So runs a rudimentary, “programmatic” analysis of the piece, one that generally emphasizes the positive in London, a view with which Elgar himself, it appears, was sympathetic. To August Jaeger, he described the work as “cheerful & Londony—‘stout and steaky’”; to Hans Richter, he claimed that there was “nothing deep or melancholy—it is intended to be honest, healthy, humorous and strong but not vulgar.”⁵ This view was echoed by Elgar’s friends and critics: Jaeger commented to Alice Elgar that he was glad Elgar had “done something *jolly* after the serious & awesome [*sic*] Gerontius”; Joseph Bennett, reviewing the premiere of the piece on 20 June 1901, wrote that “There is no suggestion here of a city of dreadful night”; and Ernest Newman, in his monograph on the composer, claimed that the overture was “unflecked by any suspicion of care or ‘problem’. It is not the harassed London of Mr. Charles Booth, but the happy-go-luck London of Phil May... that Elgar dwells upon.”⁶ The London of *Cockaigne*, then, would appear to be straightforward, jolly, even affectionate, and without any hint of social problems.

Such optimistic sentiments contrast with Elgar’s own experience of the capital. After their marriage in 1889, the Elgars had moved to London, partly so that Edward might establish himself as a composer; but in that respect their sojourn was unsuccessful, and by 1891 they had returned to Worcester. Henceforth, Elgar’s relationship with London was somewhat uneasy: his provocative comment in 1903 that “the living centre of music in Great Britain is not London, but somewhere further North” attracted plenty of criticism in the leading music periodicals, while his suggestion in 1905 that Leipzig

(rather than London) might prove the most appropriate model for music-making in Birmingham can be viewed as an anti-metropolitan snub.⁷ During this period, perhaps prompted by Bennett's review of the premiere, Elgar considered writing a companion overture to *Cockaigne* based on James Thomson's famous depiction of urban dystopia, *The City of Dreadful Night* (1874).⁸ The overture would remain unwritten, but material from the sketches was reworked into the chromatic central section of the slow movement of the Second Symphony (figure 74ff). Whether the angst of that famous passage is specifically urban, rather than simply personal, is debatable: both Brian Trowell and Diana McVeagh interpret Elgar's interest in Thomson's poem as a reflection of the composer's despair at his threatened loss of faith.⁹ But the fact that Elgar considered writing a "Dreadful Night" overture at all indicates that he was aware of the unpleasant side to urban living, and perhaps sympathetic to the plight of those who found it a struggle.

The existence of a pessimistic successor to *Cockaigne* would seem to confirm the optimism of the earlier work. But Elgar's ambivalence towards London is reflected even in the composition of *Cockaigne* itself. The final page of the score, completed on 24 March 1901, is inscribed with a transliteration from William Langland's Middle English poem *Piers Plowman*: "Metelees and monelees on Malverne hulles." Following the disastrous premiere of *Gerontius* in September 1900, Elgar had become particularly drawn to this poem; indeed, he described it to Jaeger as his "Bible, a marvelous book." It thus provides an insight into his mindset during the period that he wrote *Cockaigne*, for *Piers Plowman* is not a happy story. A wanderer falls asleep on the Malvern Hills and has a vision of the Severn valley full of many people, including musicians. The vision

extends to London “where flourish the seven deadly sins: pride, lechery, envy, wrath, avarice, and the rest.” Piers Plowman then arose, a “‘People’s Christ’ of the countryside ‘who tills for all’.” He wins God’s pardon for those whose works match their faith, but his triumph is denied by a priest who stands for the Church’s monopoly of pure faith. The quarrel penetrates the dream and the sleeper awakens to an empty and darkening world, “meatless and moneyless on the Malvern hills.”¹⁰

There is no doubt that Elgar felt dejected like the wanderer of the poem; in a letter to Richter on 1 April 1901 he wrote that *Cockaigne* was “not tragic at all—but extremely cheerful *like a miserable unsuccessful man ought to write*.”¹¹ But his connection with *Piers Plowman* may well have gone beyond shared despondency with the wanderer to identification with Piers himself. If Piers was a “People’s Christ” from the Malverns “who tills for all,” then Elgar, who saw his vocation as a popular “bard,” was surely a “People’s composer” from the Malverns “who writes for all.” Piers, the savior of his people, had travelled to London only to be reprimanded by clerical orthodoxy; Elgar, the putative savior of his country’s music, was denied *his* triumph by the London-based high priests of the English musical renaissance, some of whom regarded his music with the utmost suspicion.¹² Whereas Piers viewed London as a vice den, however, Elgar desperately wanted to be part of its establishment. In the same letter to Jaeger where he referred to *Cockaigne* as “stout and steaky,” he lamented the “commonplace ass-music” in Worcester: “the bucolics are all right when they don’t attempt more than eat, drink & Sleep but beyond those things they fail.”¹³ Elgar’s desire to transcend the limited horizons of provincial music-making through success in the city reveals him to be a well-established phenomenon in late Victorian society: the countryman who came to the city

to “transform his mediocrity... into the highest talent.”¹⁴ Until he achieved such success, however, he would remain an outsider not only socially (as a lower middle-class autodidact within an upper middle-class London musical establishment), but also geographically.

Elgar’s ambiguous relationship with London suggests that it would be unwise to take the optimism of *Cockaigne* entirely at face value, as most scholars of the composer have done. However much the overture might be thought “honest, healthy and humorous” rather than a depiction of a “city of dreadful night,” the fact that Bennett and Newman overtly refute the idea that *Cockaigne* might touch on the dark side of modern urban life indicates their awareness of this dark side; and one is left with a sense that they, and Elgar, “doth protest too much.” Can an overture about a modern city really be quite so free of problems as *Cockaigne* appears to be? My task in this article is to answer this question by interpreting *Cockaigne* as a depiction of an early twentieth-century megalopolis. Firstly, I examine how contemporary sociologists and cultural theorists often conceived of the modern city as the polar opposite of the countryside, part of an urban-rural dialectic that lay at the heart of national and imperial identity. I then deconstruct the critical writing on the overture, which frequently presents *Cockaigne* in terms that owe more to a Romantic, nature-inspired organicism than to the simultaneism associated with the modern city in other art forms; a notable exception, however, is an article written about Elgar by a contemporary German critic, Max Hehemann, that explicitly refers to *Cockaigne* as the “music of the world city.” Prompted partly by Hehemann’s reading of the work, I propose that *Cockaigne* is governed by an “urban poetics,” and offer a hermeneutic analysis of the overture that considers how, through

these urban poetics, certain experiences and ideologies of the modern city are embedded in the work's form and syntax: simultaneity, militarism (particularly relevant given that the work was composed at the end of the Boer War), and social Darwinism. I shall conclude by considering how this interpretation of the work may affect our view of Elgar as a national/nationalist English composer, and how the narrative in *Cockaigne* of the modern "citizen-hero" may mirror our own experiences as consumers of culture.

Urban realities, rural ideologies

The tension between Elgar's desire for acceptance by a metropolitan elite, and the alienation he felt from it, illustrates in microcosm the symbiotic relationship that existed between city and country at the beginning of the twentieth century, in Britain and elsewhere. This symbiosis was felt particularly keenly in the role that each played in the construction of national identities. To a great extent, the interests of a metropolis were also those of the nation: the modern city, particularly the capital, was a centre of commerce and industry, of transport and communications, of public administration, education, culture, and (in the Britain of 1900) empire—everything, in short, that underpinned the modern nation state. On the other hand, the living and working conditions in poorer districts of a city were frequently appalling, particularly in countries where industrialization and urbanization had occurred later and more rapidly. The consequences of such deprivation became a subject of concern for many social critics. Perhaps the most famous of these was Max Nordau, who argued that modern urban living was a precursor to human degeneration:

The inhabitant of a large town, even the richest who is surrounded with the greatest luxury, is continually exposed to the unfavorable influences which diminish his vital powers far more than what is inevitable. He breathes an atmosphere charged with organic detritus; he eats stale, contaminated, adulterated food; he feels himself in a state of constant nervous excitement, and one can compare him without exaggeration to the inhabitant of a marshy district.¹⁵

Nordau was not alone: Georg Hansen, writing in 1889, called for the preservation of an agricultural class as “the fundamental condition of national vigor and well-being” precisely because these qualities could not be found within cities; and G.B. Longstaff asserted that “long life in towns is accompanied by more or less degeneration of race.”¹⁶ Thus the urban heart of the nation had become a threat to its well-being.

The Boer War (1899-1900) was to prove Longstaff right. A high proportion of the British volunteers from the large cities were rejected on physical grounds, and this, combined with the fact that the war itself was going badly, precipitated a “sharp wave of unease in which the whole condition of British society was called into question... [C]oncern centred on the teeming cities.”¹⁷ Various reasons were put forward for the physical decrepitude of the volunteers, most obviously poverty and immorality (in various guises), but also environmental factors such as poor housing, an absence of green spaces and a lack of fresh air. Sociologists, economists and urban geographers suggested various ways to improve the urban environment, ranging from a national fresh air tax (proposed by the economist Alfred Marshall in 1899) to garden cities.¹⁸ Underpinning

these suggestions was a belief that city dwellers could not continue to live in an exclusively urban environment. As the American sociologist Charles H. Cooley argued:

Humanity demands that men should have sunlight, fresh air, the sight of grass and trees. It demands these things for the man himself, and it demands them still more urgently for his wife and children. No child has a fair chance in the world who is condemned to grow up in the dirt and confinement, the dreariness, ugliness and vice of the poor quarters of a great city... Whatever struggles manhood must endure, childhood should have room and opportunity for healthy moral and physical growth.¹⁹

Cooley's conflation of moral and physical growth in a quasi-rural setting has a political as well as a social dimension. Although the modern nation depended on the industrial and commercial power of urban life, it was in the country that it saw, and sought to preserve, its "essence." This was partly because cities appeared to produce intrinsically unhealthy human beings, but it also reflected fears of the metropolis as a racial melting pot. Incomers had always been a feature of urban populations, but recent improvements to transport meant that a far greater proportion of immigrants now came from other countries.²⁰ Many were regarded with suspicion. Because their ethnic roots were not local, it was assumed that they would lack civic, or even national, pride.²¹ Moreover, the tendency of particular ethnic groups to become "ghettoized" in slum areas meant that the racial problem often acquired a social dimension. The foreign navvy was considered suspect: he had no reason to respect a social system of which he inhabited the

bottommost rung. But suspect, too, was the *deraciné* urban professional, who was characterized by shallow, shifting values.²² And because a higher proportion of urban residents tended to be from the top and bottom of the social scale than in rural areas, the stereotypes of the cosmopolitan professional and the immigrant laborer became synonymous with an implicitly anti-national construction of the city.²³

The converse to this construction was a right-wing ruralist ideology that emphasized the racial and national “purity” of the countryside. Such views were particularly noticeable in Germany, where an association was made increasingly between an essentialized, implicitly conservative, “*Deutschtum*” and the countryside (and therefore also between an implicitly non-German, potentially subversive, urban radicalism). Otto March, the leading campaigner for Berlin regional town planning, claimed, for instance, that for

a man to live under his own roof in close contact with nature strengthens his love of home life and of his country as well. On the other hand, to house an intransigent proletariat in the back courts of city tenements is to create a serious danger for the State. Constantly moving house as they do, the denizens of the cities lose that feeling of domestic roots which, in time of peril, makes it the most natural thing in the world for a man to defend house and home with his own life.²⁴

But the idea that the homeland for which one might die was essentially rural had resonances in Britain too, exemplified half a generation later by Rupert Brooke in “The Soldier,” where

A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her [England’s] flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England’s, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.²⁵

In short, as Oswald Spengler would later put it, “The roots of human life are always in the soil... only in civilization with its giant cities do we disengage ourselves from such roots.”²⁶ Cities were an aberration from nature; the countryside, by contrast, provided an anti-modern model for the nation that linked it to humanity in general. In this model, “nature” became equated with “natural” law, morality, stability and peace, exemplified in a countryside where such old, pre-modern notions were not threatened by the “unnatural” machinery of the city, or its different races, ideologies and moralities. Consequently, however much a capital city like London might be the institutional centre of the nation, it could never truly reflect that nation (or so the thinking went): the inherent diversity of the city made any single corporate identity impossible. Indeed, this diversity threatened even individual identity; constantly forced to discriminate between a bewildering number of consumable goods and experiences, a city dweller was faced with complex moral choices that were utterly alien to an organic rural community.

A singular, romanticized countryside versus a plural, modernist city: this is the context within which Elgar's work should be read. But although there is no shortage of diversity within *Cockaigne*, most Elgar criticism to date has done little more than recount the narrative of the overture as a succession of events of more or less equal importance, if that. For some critics, the different impressions merge into one: J.F. Porte claimed that the overture simply depicted the "local colour of Bank-Holiday London," while for Thomas Dunhill it was no more than "a superficial view of London, as seen by a casual visitor."²⁷ Ernest Newman's account of the overture is more detailed, but he offers no indication that anyone's identity might be constructed, for good or for ill, by their experience of hearing a Salvation Army band, or their decision to enter a church, beyond the "joy of [the] youngsters" in hearing the military band.²⁸ A more recent critic, Jerrold Northrop Moore, does differentiate between the experiences of the overture, but suggests that they derive from one common musical source: the "citizen" theme, Elgar's depiction of the "history of [London's] unending charity". From this theme come almost all the others of the overture: not only the "cockney" diminution mentioned above, but the opening "city" theme, the "lovers" second subject and the military march as well.²⁹ The significance of Moore's interpretation, however, is not so much that his analysis is convincing—often it is not—but the nature of the musical thinking that underpins it.³⁰ Moore is at pains to emphasize the underlying unity of *Cockaigne*, both through the interconnectedness of its themes and through its use of sonata form; but this emphasis raises more questions than it answers. Sonata form is hardly ideologically neutral; as Susan McClary and others have observed, the process of an "other" (albeit related) key's being reconciled to a "home" tonic may be viewed not only positively, as evidence of a

piece's musical coherence, but negatively, as a suppression of differences.³¹ An examination of the implications of this negative narrative might seem an appropriate course of action for a critic to take in a work like *Cockaigne*. Moore, however, chooses instead to celebrate the overture's organic unity: an approach whose conservative Hanslickian aesthetics are close to the rural ideology of March and Spengler, since both attempt to find "truth" (whether social or artistic) in the unity of nature.³² The hermeneutic implications of this in *Cockaigne* are profound. By presenting the different city themes as developments of a single musical source, Moore implies that urban existence was essentially coherent rather than chaotic. This is hardly indicative of a modern metropolis, with its multiple identities and social tensions, but rather of a city whose social structures recall an earlier age, especially when we consider that the single source in question was inspired by "memorials of the city's past."³³ Moreover, given that Moore assigns to the lovers the essentially passive role of "presenter of the experiences," there is no sense that they—or we—should differentiate, let alone discriminate, between any of these experiences.³⁴

It is hard not to infer from Moore's reading that Elgar, the countryman, has imposed a ruralist prototype on London, one in which the city is conceived as an organic body, and where old-fashioned values remained firmly in place.³⁵ This impression is reinforced by the work's subtitle, "In London Town," which hints at a smaller, pre-modern city of modest size, in a way that the title of Delius's roughly contemporary (but as yet unperformed) work, *Paris—Song of a Great City* (1899), does not. Nor, apart from a small picture of Piccadilly Circus, do the images on the title page of the published score of *Cockaigne* evoke the intense variegation of the modern metropolis (see Figure 2).

There are representations of Edwardian London's spiritual and temporal establishments (St. Paul's Cathedral and Big Ben, respectively), but the largest picture is of a military band on parade, whilst the remainder conjure up images of either the suburban (a golfer), or "Olde Englande": jousters, archers, and the Elizabethan-looking timber-fronted shops of High Holborn. Consequently, we are left wondering whether "Cockaigne" really refers to the land of cockneys (and, if so, of what era) or to the mythical "Land of Cokaygne" of the medieval English poem of that name, where there is "mēt & drink / Withvte care, bow [anxiety] and swinke."³⁶

This conservative image of London might best be described as "one-nation," a term coined from Benjamin Disraeli's novel *Sybil: or the Two Nations* (1845), and one that is used to describe the approach to politics that Disraeli adopted during his premiership of 1874-80. Essentially, one-nation conservatism was characterized by a realignment of politics in which the aristocracy sided with the working classes against the economic liberalism of the entrepreneurial middle classes. This ostensibly strange alliance was cemented by three factors: a shared belief in "traditional" values; an acknowledgment by the upper classes of the need for social reform (although not to the extent of eroding traditional class distinctions); and a belief in imperial expansion, which would provide a collective sense of nationhood that transcended the divisions of class politics. And it is this conception that perhaps best describes the traditional view of *Cockaigne*. London is treated neither as a centre of commerce, nor as a vehicle for consumerism, for that would emphasize a liberal modernity that ran counter to a socially conservative one-nation consensus; similarly, there is no hint that the presence of a Salvation Army band might remind us of the need for the existence of the Salvation

Army in the first place, since that might conjure up the social divisions embodied in the working-class gin palace. The military march provides evidence not only of local color, but of universally felt patriotism; there is no suggestion here, seemingly, of the national embarrassment felt when volunteers from the cities were turned down for active service in the Boer War, only months previously, on account of their physical weakness. It is an objectified picture postcard of imperialist London: the institutional heart of both nation and empire, rather than a commercial or racial subverter of it. And it is this myth of a picture postcard *Cockaigne* that we must now question.

Alternative conceptions of the city

One-nation interpretations of *Cockaigne* fail to capture either the character of the modern city in general or the particular situation of London in 1900; there is no evidence for Anthony Sutcliffe's claim that, from the 1880s onwards, "British confidence in the quality of national society, and in British ability to generate solutions to social problems, had begun to wane."³⁷ But, in the light of this assertion, it is surely essential that we probe beneath the surface of the work to see if these anxieties really are absent. Does *Cockaigne* represent a "superficial" view of London, as Dunhill claimed, or does that comment reveal more about how he and others chose to hear the piece? If the latter, then a different analytical approach, one that considers both musical text and sociological context, might reveal a London that was far more modern than that implied by Porte, Moore, *et al.*: a socially diverse city that did not support the unities of nationhood and society so much as call them into question. This type of city was a source of inspiration for many European and American artists, notably Henry James, for whom London was

“the biggest aggregation of human life, the most complete compendium of the world,” where the “human race [was] better represented... than anywhere else,” and Baudelaire, for whom “le transitoire, le fugitif, le contingent” (“the transitory, fugitive, contingent”) of modernity constituted “la moitié de l’art” (“half of art”).³⁸ The energy of modern urban life also featured in two musical works roughly contemporary with *Cockaigne*—Delius’s *Paris—Song of a Great City* (1899) and Charpentier’s opera *Louise* (1900)—both of which depict the artistic world of Paris; indeed, in *Louise*, that artistic environment coexisted with—and, for the eponymous heroine, provided liberation from—the humdrum reality of working-class life. Admittedly the London of *Cockaigne* was quite different from the decadence of Charpentier’s Montmartre; but, as a work about a metropolis, it nevertheless formed part of the same contemporary discourse on the city.

Given the one-nation tone of *Cockaigne* criticism in Britain, however, it is scarcely surprising that almost the only critic to see Elgar’s overture in this more contemporary light was an outsider.³⁹ In an article written in 1903 for the leading German music periodical, *Die Musik*, Max Hehemann provided a synopsis for *Cockaigne* that often differed sharply from the “Bank-Holiday London” view of the work outlined above. According to Hehemann, Elgar aimed in *Cockaigne* “to portray in music the drive of the modern city.” “It is the music of the world city that we hear here, the music of a vast centre for millions, of a city of work and business,” wrote Hehemann. “Londoners are not Phaeacians; they are not lazy and are not given to the enjoyment of cozy dignity, but rather busy, active and self-confident.”⁴⁰ In emphasizing *Cockaigne*’s modern features, Hehemann consciously distanced it from the work that he considered to be its most obvious predecessor: Berlioz’s *Roman Carnival* overture. Berlioz is presented as the

quintessential Romantic artist, of whom “it could be claimed... that he mingles among the people,” yet who implicitly remained apart from them; his piece was about events that surrounded him, but in which he did not himself participate.⁴¹ Elgar’s portrayal of the city, by contrast, was “astonishingly realistic”—so much so, indeed, that Hehemann claimed “it could be said of Elgar that he brings the people themselves on to the stage.”⁴² To adopt a visual analogy, it was as if *Roman Carnival* were the musical equivalent of a painting and *Cockaigne* the musical equivalent of a photograph: the former is the product of romanticized subjectivity, the latter a series of objective snapshots that capture the inherent complexity of the metropolis.⁴³

Hehemann’s critique is unusual not only in its interpretation of *Cockaigne* as a depiction of the modern city, but in its implication that the modern city might be perceived in anything other than a negative light; for many leading musicians in Britain—composers and critics alike—regarded urbanization as a threat to their art. In his address to the inaugural meeting of the Folk Song Society in 1898, Sir Hubert Parry described folksong as “wholesome” and “clean,” but popular urban song as “repulsive and invidious,” “shoddy,” “sham,” “stale,” “false” and “unhealthy”—a standpoint, one imagines, that would have attracted little if any opposition from his audience.⁴⁴ Parry’s views reflected a wider consensus that, in privileging “rural” music over its urban counterpart, reflected more general concerns about the relationship between the modern city and the nation. F. Gilbert Webb’s claim that folksongs “gathered strength by age,” for instance, suggests a cultural rootedness that was lacking in popular urban song, which appealed to emotions that were “phases of fleeting feeling rather than the elemental forces of humanity, and consequently the songs pass away with the passing sentiment.”⁴⁵

Indeed, Webb believed a composer's environment would leave its mark on his/her music in more subliminal ways, as is shown by his explanation for the rhythmic flexibility of the music of southern and eastern Europe. "The inevitable tendency of living the greater part of the day in a house"—a characteristic of northern and western Europe, which was more urbanized—"is to put things in order, to arrange constantly-seen objects symmetrically. Out of doors there is little or no symmetry, and the importance of details is less impressed on the eyes. This influence of environment cannot fail to affect modes of thought, and consequently manner of speech, and finally style in a people's music". Webb's concerns were supported by John E. Borland, the editor of *Musical News*, who claimed that "you will find the sense of [complex and flexible] rhythm is strong among those who live on the hills, weaker among those who live on the level, and weakest of all"—that is, most regular—"among those who walk in the streets."⁴⁶ The message was clear: cities and civilization deadened a composer's sensations.

Such views are no more than we might expect from composers and critics committed to the establishment of a "national" music that transcended time and space. The real significance of their remarks, however, is the implication that music inspired by the city was inherently different from that inspired by the country. Borland's theory of "urban rhythm" is certainly apparent in *Cockaigne*: triplets are used rarely; only during the military march is there widespread use of tremolando; phrase lengths are almost always in multiples of four measures; and there are no notated triple or compound meters (an unusual occurrence for a single Elgarian movement of this length). Melodic development, too, seems to owe something to songs that "pass away with the passing sentiment." The different themes seem to exist *a priori*, as it were, waiting to be heard

successively or simultaneously; *pace* Moore, they do not “evolve” from one to another in the manner of Brahmsian developing variation.

What we have here, then, might be called an “urban poetics” of music: one that is characterized by gestures that, as an expression of a modern metropolitan sensibility, resist being subsumed into an organic whole. This urban poetics can manifest itself in many ways (e.g. formal disruption, melodic discontinuity, popular *topoi*); but its importance lies in the fact that it provides a musical complement to the characteristics of modern urban experience outlined in sociological writing of the period (and later), with the result that we can “read” some of these characteristics, hermeneutically, into the musical text. It is with three such distinctive features that the remainder of this article is concerned: consumerism, militarism and social Darwinism. With consumerism, I consider how a listener might experience different episodes within the development, how s/he might avoid being overwhelmed by their sheer variety, and whether a hierarchy might exist among them. With militarism, I examine the formal and topical role of the military march in *Cockaigne*: is it more subversive than the cheerful patriotism of traditional interpretations might suggest? With social Darwinism, I consider the musical journey of the “citizen” theme, and uncover a narrative that suggests that the London of *Cockaigne* might be seen as oppressive and divided, rather than united and unremittingly jolly.

Consumerism

By 1900, great cities had become mass markets for consumable goods to a degree that would have been unimaginable a century earlier. The specialization that resulted from the

division of labor, combined with the mechanical innovations of the industrial revolution, ensured that such goods could be manufactured in vast quantities; improvements to transport, particularly the development of railways, meant that they could be transported easily; and urbanization meant that there was a large, geographically concentrated group of potential customers for them. With vast quantity came diversity: in the largest cities, especially, many commodities for sale had originated in the nation's colonies. Consumer demand for these exotic novelties was seemingly insatiable, at least for those who could afford them; as Lewis Mumford has commented, "power, speed, quantity, and novelty became ends in themselves."⁴⁷

But this diversity created social problems of its own, above all the preservation of one's identity. In an important early twentieth-century study of life in the modern city, *Die Grosstadt und das Geistesleben* (1903), the German sociologist Georg Simmel argued that "the deepest problems of modern life... derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life."⁴⁸ Such autonomy could only be achieved by ensuring that one's responses to the unfamiliar were intellectual rather than emotional, as Don Martindale, paraphrasing Simmel, explains:

[M]etropolitan man is subject to an unusual volume of stimulation and he develops a mentality protecting himself against elements in the external environment which would uproot him. This means that he must react with his head rather than his heart—to yield to deep emotional reactions is to be

crushed. His environment intensifies his awareness, not his feeling, leading to a dominance of intelligence. Intellectuality, which extends in many directions with the specialization of the urban environment, is characteristic of the city.⁴⁹

Nowhere was this “volume of stimulation” more apparent than in the profusion of consumable goods and experiences, competing with each other for a city dweller’s attention or money. To purchase something, material or non-material, was to align oneself to a particular passing taste, however transient that taste might be.⁵⁰ At one level, this might lead to a highly developed sense of personal subjectivity, but, Simmel claimed, because the context of these experiences changed so rapidly, a city dweller’s powers of discrimination often became blunted, his values relativized, and his attitudes blasé: “the self-preservation of certain personalities [is]... brought [*sic*] at the price of devaluing the whole objective world, a devaluation which in the end unavoidably drags one’s own personality down into a feeling of the same worthlessness.”⁵¹ Freedom of choice for the urban consumer was therefore a façade: in following fashion, one became a slave to it, and self-loathing was the result. Yet the alternative—a rejection of everything the city had to offer, leading to isolation from society—was no better.

Whereas “one-nationism” presupposed an underlying coherence, consumerism (in the widest sense) was characterized by incoherence: the lack of harmony or resolution between different experiences, and between these experiences and oneself. The effect of the latter was disorientation, both temporally and spatially. Because the experiences occurred simultaneously, there was no logical sense of progression from one to another;

instead, there was montage-like dynamic equilibrium. And because personality was always being defined (and redefined) by what one had experienced in public—whether in a shop, in a concert hall, or on the street—it was impossible for individuality to be predicated on the notion of individuated space. As Jules Romain put it:

Space doesn't belong to anyone in particular. And no-one has succeeded in appropriating for themselves a bit of space, in order to saturate it with their unique existence. Everything interpenetrates, coincides, cohabits. Each bridge is a perch for a thousand birds.⁵²

The decentering of the self entailed by this disorientation has profound consequences for a work like *Cockaigne*. Is a linear narrative of the sort outlined in one-nation readings actually possible, given the simultaneities of city life, or would such a narrative be arbitrary? If so, this raises further questions about such passages as the military march, which *does* take complete possession of the urban space, momentarily overwhelming the listener. And who is the narrator? Hehemann's observation that Elgar "brings the people themselves on to the stage" suggests a collective rather than an individual narrative; but, if so, it is one in which the narrators are almost always defined by experiences from which they cannot distance themselves.⁵³ Heterogeneity and simultaneity are thus more than simply an "astonishingly realistic" portrayal of a modern city: they are a structurally destabilizing force.

This is particularly apparent than in the overture's episodic development, where the constantly changing urban environment is depicted by rapid thematic juxtaposition,

particularly in passages between statements of the main thematic groups. These passages are particularly significant, since it is here that we find a conflict between (or transference of) narrative identities within the overture. A striking example occurs two measures before rehearsal figure 19 (Example 2), towards the end of the military march. The elements of that theme are still fully in place: the B-flat major key, the ostinato bass line descending from tonic to dominant twice every measure, the regular rhythms tempered only by occasional triplet semiquaver elaborations. But the march has almost passed, and another voice is about to return: that of the cockney.

The process by which this happens is very gradual. First, the regularity of the four-measure phrase is undermined, with the repetition a fifth higher of two measures before figure 19. Second, the ostinato bass is moved from the tonic to other degrees in the scale (the mediant and the dominant); combined with the presence of the flattened leading note, this serves, at figure 19, to change the function of B-flat major from local tonic to dominant of E-flat, the original key of the cockney theme. Figure 19 also sees the return of the three-note figure that opens the cockney theme (Bb—D—Eb), but off the beat, as if to demonstrate that it does not yet possess the full focus of our attention. Given the continuing presence of the descending bass line of the march, it clearly doesn't. But the instruments which play the bass line are increasingly outnumbered by those playing the <semiquaver><semiquaver><quaver> rhythm of the cockney theme; moreover, the frequency of this figure increases rapidly from once every half-measure (figure 19:1), through once every beat (19:2), to once every half-beat (19:4). By figure 19:5, the elements of the military march have faded away, and have been replaced by those of the

cockney theme, above all the E-flat major tonic and the chromatic part-writing (including in the bass).

This brief transition offers interesting insights into Elgar's approach to thematic development in *Cockaigne*. His approach here is less "organic" than it is quasi-cinematographic. Instead of one musical idea metamorphosing seamlessly into another, there are two discrete themes, struggling for supremacy. In reorienting our attention from one theme to another, Elgar is almost playing the part of a cameraman: foregrounding one theme, refocusing on another, but always conscious that both exist. The analogy is most appropriate in this case, for the cockney theme at figure 19 might be heard as a re-emergence in diminution of the E-flat major rendition of the "citizen" theme that faded away at figure 13, and which was replaced (or temporarily obliterated) by the military march. Thus, *Cockaigne* functions as a centre of consumerism: the different themes compete with each other for the exclusive attention of the listener, and, in doing so, reveal the irreducible plurality of the work's narratives.

A more complex example occurs in the episode set in a church (Example 3). The musical material of this episode consists of invertible two-part counterpoint: an undulating melody in clarinets and horns, first heard at rehearsal figure 23, and a scalar pattern in D-flat major that hints at a church bell peal. At 24:4, however, the piccolo and oboe provide an additional counterpoint: the cockney theme, which is repeated twice to make a three-measure phrase, after which it disappears again. It is replaced by the second subject, initially on the first violins, then on the cellos and clarinets two measures later, and on the flutes and oboes a measure after that. After two more measures of the second

subject, the cockney theme reappears once more on the first violins. Throughout this passage, the original two-part counterpoint continues in the strings and lower winds.

Instead of one theme emerging from the shadow of another to replace it, as with the march, two contrasting themes emerge alternately from the texture of a third (something Elgar achieves through some subtle dynamic markings: the two-part counterpoint is consistently *piano*; the other two themes are sometimes as loud as *mf*). But the principle is the same as before: as listeners, we become ‘consumers’ of the competing themes, none of which is capable of functioning as a (singular) coherent narrator. That this disorder is laced with irony is evident when we read the passage hermeneutically. The two-part counterpoint provides an appropriate musical metaphor for the coherence of traditional moral or church values, the more so because it is in a key, D-flat major, that is almost as far removed as possible from the C major of the city. But the irreverent interjections of the cockney theme (initially in F) and the ‘lovers’ theme (the second subject, in C) indicate that the church cannot maintain this coherence within an urban environment that seeks to disrupt it; indeed, the ease with which both themes combine with the existing counterpoint would suggest that the church itself has become commodified as just another aspect of the London tourist trail.

The end of the church episode marks a point of maximum disorder within the overture, so it is perhaps unsurprising that, rather than attempt to reconcile the divergent elements in a quasi-organicist manner, or transform the church music into another theme gradually, as he did with the military march, Elgar instead ends the episode abruptly at figure 25. What follows is the start of the recapitulation, and with it the return of the ‘city’ theme, which was all but absent in the development (Example 4).⁵⁴ Compared with

its clear statement at the start of the work, however, here it feels disoriented and lopsided. Elgar states the opening two measures of the theme four times, each time elongating them by either half a measure or a whole measure; this results in a period of eleven measures ($2\frac{1}{2} + 3 + 2\frac{1}{2} + 3$), which is followed by a five-measure link to the recapitulation, at figure 27, of the material first heard at figure 1:4. This metrical asymmetry is important, for two reasons. Firstly, as mentioned above, rhythmic and metrical regularity was a feature of the musical language commonly used to depict the modern city; any irregularity thus might suggest that the city, in some way, was not functioning properly. Secondly, if the theme is perceived as a symbol of the city as a whole, it needs to be given time to re-establish itself from the thematic disorder of the church episode, rather than suddenly be presented *in toto*. To restate the city theme as a unified whole after a passage of such diversity would be to deny that diversity. Consequently, between the detailed semiotic play of the church music and a clear statement of the city theme, the music has to pass through a “grey area” that is neither so distant from the preceding passage that the latter becomes a homogenized mass, nor so close to it that its differences can be perceived. Once again, the most appropriate analogy for this process is photographic: the church episode sees a “zooming in” on a particular urban experience, in which themes meet each other and disappear again, rather than resolve into a new unity; the start of recapitulation, conversely, witnesses a “zooming out” in order to regain a wider perspective. Inevitably, however, the precise moment of that change of perspective is a somewhat unfocussed one.

As with the end of the military march, these cinematographic techniques aptly reflect the discontinuities of urban modernism. Thematic development takes place not

through the organic development of a single musical idea, but through the emergence, interaction and disappearance of more-or-less discrete and precisely defined musical entities: the music of the consumer who might buy one thing, might ignore another, but would experience all of them. But the essentially fortuitous nature of these meetings should not disguise the fact that a hierarchy exists within them: some experiences (and therefore musical themes) are more important than others. The Salvation Army band and the church do not reappear in the recapitulation, but the military march does—and, as in the development, seems to attain an almost insuperable importance in the process. As we shall now see, this is no coincidence.

Militarism

Given that Elgar is silent on the subject, it is to the critics that we must turn to explain the importance of the military march in *Cockaigne*. For Hehemann, the march was associated above all with the enthusiastic popular response that it elicited. “A few notes of military music penetrate from far away,” he wrote of the first appearance of the march in the development, “and already there draws near, running and chasing, anyone who has legs. Now the music passes by, after it the dear young people.”⁵⁵ Over the next few decades, this enthusiasm for all things military would be viewed, among some critics, as a particularly British characteristic—or, at least, as characteristic of a particular period in British history. Porte, for instance, claimed that *Cockaigne* reflected “in many places, the broad, British, and almost vulgar spirit of the victorious military events of the period”; similarly, Basil Maine, Elgar’s authorized biographer, asserted that the “virtues” and ideals of Edwardian imperialism were inherent in the march genre, certain versions of

which, such as the “Pomp and Circumstance” works, embodied the English national character (they could “produce a momentary thrill” which would compel a crowd to watch a march past of soldiers).⁵⁶

This conflation of the military associations of *Cockaigne* and the Anglo-British national character also manifests itself in the opening words of Evans’s introduction to the miniature score:

In considering this Overture of Elgar’s the date is of greater importance than usual. It was first performed at a Philharmonic Concert on June 20th, 1901. The South African [i.e. Boer] war was not ended, but had entered upon its final stage, and London’s patriotism was freed from such anxieties as the siege of Mafeking, the relief of which had added a new word to the language. The long reign of Queen Victoria had ended five months earlier, and London was on the threshold of that period of social splendor which we know as Edwardian. Elgar’s Overture reflects a London that is animated, but not hectic, occasionally grave but never despondent, and appreciative but not boastful of its resources, of which it had not learned the limitations.⁵⁷

Evans’s is a quintessentially one-nation interpretation of the overture: self-assured, untroubled and patriotic. This self-assuredness requires some deconstruction, however, particularly in view of Evans’s mentioning Mafeking, where, at the start of the Boer War, British troops, under Baden-Powell, successfully withstood a siege from an army four times their size for seven months (13 October 1899 to 17 May 1900). Evans is

unquestionably right to draw attention to the siege: it is inconceivable that the composer of *The Banner of St. George* and *Caractacus* would not have been influenced by the great celebrations in London that marked the relief of Mafeking; and it was surely foremost among the “victorious military events” to which Porte referred.⁵⁸ But the real significance of this reference is surely what remains unsaid. As outlined earlier in this chapter, Britain’s victory in the Boer War was achieved despite the poor health of many of her volunteers, a state of affairs that many blamed on the social divisions of modern cities. Parts of London might indeed have been “animated, but not hectic, occasionally grave but never despondent, and appreciative but not boastful of its resources,” but not, one suspects, all of it; and to suggest otherwise, as Evans does, is to paper over the cracks of social division in favor of a view of society that is united by the military nature of its external affairs.⁵⁹ But this is no less than the music itself does: by swamping the potential conflicting narrative voices, the march also transcends their divisions, albeit briefly.

We shall consider the implications of this shortly. First, however, we need to consider the “spectators”: those whose voices are momentarily drowned out by the march, but who reappear at the end of the march, with the appearance of the cockney theme at figure 19:5. Evans identifies them as “small boys,” who “as usual” follow a band as it passes; Hehemann refers to them even more affectionately as “dear young people” (“liebe Jugend”).⁶⁰ But Hehemann’s first description of the cockney theme, at figure 7, tells a different story: “a crowd of lively rogues storms past, and with that, the hurly-burly starts” (“eine Schar munterer Buben stürmt herbei und damit geht der Trubel los”). This is considerably darker than Evans’s description of the same passage as a

depiction of a “ubiquitous cheeky London youngster, who is also a ‘citizen’,” but perhaps with good reason.⁶¹

These “rogues” were emblematic of all that was wrong with the modern city in the eyes of some commentators, by no means all of them politically conservative. The left-wing economist, J.A. Hobson, while conceding there could be “no question but that the townsman has a larger superficial knowledge of the world and human nature [than the countryman],” lamented the fact that this knowledge was attained via a school system that was

commonly utilized to sharpen industrial capitalism and to feed that sensational interest in sport and crime which absorbs the attention of the masses in their non-working hours; it seldom forms the foundation of an intellectual life in which knowledge and taste are reckoned in themselves desirable... Social, political and religious prejudices are made to do the work which should be done by careful thought and scientific investigation... Town life, then, strongly favors the education of certain shallow forms of intelligence.⁶²

This essentially utilitarian education left its mark in two ways. Firstly, it generally had the effect of producing mentally (though not, as we have already noted, physically) tough citizens, capable of surviving life in the metropolis. This toughness manifested itself in different ways: for the upwardly mobile, it provided the foundation for a successful career and social advancement; for those who were left behind in penury, however, it was

often directed towards petty crime—Victorian London, after all, was the home of the Artful Dodger.⁶³ Thus Hehemann’s comment that “Elgar spares us closer acquaintanceship with the mob” is less reassuring than at first it might seem; by mentioning a “mob” at all, he draws attention to the type of urban lawlessness that Elgar’s middle-class listeners had every reason to fear.⁶⁴ Secondly, a practical education system designed to enable citizens to cope with (and serve the needs of) modern capitalism inevitably perpetuated and normalized capitalist values as a social and ideological given; it supported the status quo rather than questioned it. And if this was the case in economic matters, then, given that “social, political and religious prejudices [were] made to do the work which should be done by careful thought and scientific investigation,” it is likely to have been the case with social and political matters too. It requires no great leap of imagination to suppose that an imperialist foreign policy that had brought considerable economic benefits to Britain would have attracted little opposition at popular level; that the values underpinning such a policy would have been considered “natural”; and that any public manifestation of those values, such as in a military march, might be considered grounds for unquestioning celebration. Imperialism was thus able, increasingly, to bridge social divisions in a way that other political ideologies and religion could not. And it is surely this “bridging” effect that explains why the military march in *Cockaigne* overpowers everything else: in an otherwise multi-voiced city, imperialism was a creed to which everyone could subscribe—and which few could resist.

In the light of this, Hehemann’s choice of words to describe Londoners’ reactions to the appearance of the march in the recapitulation is most striking. According to

Hehemann, “The Londoner’s breast swells at this [i.e. the march], and proudly his motive [the “citizen” theme] raises itself to a song of rejoicing.”⁶⁵ If imperialism has become a quasi-religious creed, the “citizen” theme has become a hymn in praise of it. This lies in stark contrast to the trivialized treatment of “traditional” religion, as depicted in the church episode:

Then solemn organ sounds from the church come towards us. “He and she” have pious thoughts, but the young people have not much left over for that; she whistles cheerfully to it and as a result supplies a beautiful counterpoint to the song of the organ.⁶⁶

Whereas the “serious” creed of imperialism, expressed in the march, demands both a restatement and a collective response, the outmoded beliefs of traditional religion—and therefore traditional values—meet with irreverent whistling and interjections that, if hardly blasphemous in the manner of the mock-sermon in Strauss’s *Till Eulenspiegel*, certainly go unpunished. Instead, traditional religion (or religious tradition) has become another artifact for two young consumers to mould as they like. The entrance into and exit from the church possess all the evanescence of window-shopping: a short stop to look, form an opinion, and then drift away without committing oneself further. The state religion and its trappings have become little more a tourist attraction; the real religious experiences now take place in praise of the state and its dominions.

The quasi-religious function of imperialism is reflected musically in the formal treatment of the military march in *Cockaigne*. As a theme that first appears as an episode

within the development space, the march obviously exists outside the main thematic subject groups of the overture, but its reappearance in the recapitulation indicates that it is formally more significant than simply an episode. The formal device that it resembles most, however, is the brass chorale as it is used in many nineteenth-century symphonic works. In such pieces, the chorale symbolizes some religious or moral truth which is linked to the march as a goal or a reward, and which, in its final appearance, usually during or just before the coda of the finale, is frequently transfigured in some way, as if to signify arriving at that goal.⁶⁷ In *Cockaigne*, there is no chorale *per se*, but the military march takes on the characteristics of one: it is the only theme recapitulated in the tonic that does not form part of the main exposition material; it is recapitulated immediately before the coda; and at figure 37:6 there is even a sense of four-part harmony in the brass section. Perhaps most importantly, however, the march acquires the symbolism of the chorale—and, as a consequence, represents an emphatic, quasi-religious affirmation (and, in the recapitulation, reaffirmation) of an “urban” system of morality, underpinned by imperialism, that is very different from the religious certainties expressed in Bruckner’s symphonic chorales or the liberal humanism of Brahms’s. As we shall now see, the values of urban moral code were those of social Darwinism: the doctrine of “survival of the fittest,” which existed not just in the city, but in the whole practice of imperialism and aggressive nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalism.

Social Darwinism and the musical narrative of the citizen theme

Not the least impact of Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* (1859) was how it shaped political thinking about the city, both progressive and conservative. For politicians and

sociologists on the left, Darwin's explanations of how environment influenced social behavior were used to justify demands for measures designed to ameliorate the worst aspects of urban living. For political conservatives, however, the value of Darwin's work lay in the theory of natural selection, which seemingly offered proof that, as Sutcliffe has put it, "any attempt to protect [modern man] in spite of himself was doomed to failure and might even do harm to the general interest."⁶⁸ The social divisions of the city and the problems that they brought were thus unalterable facts of nature; but, far from being regretted, this was positively welcomed in some circles. In an important study published in 1899, the American sociologist Adna Ferrin Weber argued that social divisions in the city were justified on the grounds that they led to social progress. According to Weber, the levels of specialization and production found in cities necessarily attracted people from the countryside, whose "mediocrity" was then "transformed... into the highest talent or the lowest criminal." Consequently, cities were praised as "instruments of natural selection": they "weed[ed] out the incapable and inefficient, while advancing the more capable members of society."⁶⁹ Such "social Darwinist" thinking might seem positively inhumane, but Weber used it to justify even the worst vicissitudes of urban living; for instance, suicide rates in London, which were over twenty percent higher than in England as a whole, were dismissed by Weber as "one of the penalties paid for progress... [a] process of natural selection, resulting from failures in the 'struggle for existence' and therefore most prevalent where the competitive struggle is keenest" (i.e. in the cities).⁷⁰ Put simply, survival in the city was only for the "fittest" and most competitive, whose success could be measured by their economic prosperity.

It is social Darwinism—this individualistic battle for survival with one’s fellow human beings—that perhaps best reflects the reality of “citizenship” in the early twentieth century, not the charitable ideals Elgar sensed outside the Guildhall.⁷¹ We have already seen how such individualism was encouraged in the consumerism that underpinned the material values by which citizens and their successes were judged, and in a utilitarian education system that was designed to enable citizens to survive, even prosper, in the city, but which did not, ultimately, “have standards other than those of the market.”⁷² We have also seen how it might be threatened by an excess of choice that threatened to devalue one’s powers of discrimination, or by overwhelming forces one could not resist. Yet perhaps the greatest threat to individuality was the most basic: being surpassed by one’s fellow citizens. And, as we shall now observe, this too may be seen to figure in the musical discourse of *Cockaigne*, and particularly the treatment of the “citizen” theme.

The thematic analysis of the overture in Figure 1 shows how the “citizen” theme is noteworthy for two reasons: firstly, although it originally appears in the tonic, C major, its final appearance is in E-flat major; and secondly, it is “misplaced” in the recapitulation, appearing after all the other themes (whose order is otherwise unchanged), instead of before the second subject group. In a work which otherwise appears to comply with normative sonata-form practice (or at least a sonata deformation in which a series of episodes takes the place of a conventional development) these divergences are striking. But the formal function of the “citizen” theme is slightly different from those of the other themes. Although its prominent position early in the exposition suggests that it forms part of the first subject group, its connection to the “city” theme is far looser than, say, that of

the “cockney” to the “lovers” theme within the second subject group. Melodically, of course, it is related to the “cockney” theme, which is a diminution of it; but whereas the “cockney” is central to the overture in terms of both form (as part of the second subject material) and narrative voice (its presence at the end of the military march and during the “church” episode), the “citizen” theme is more like a motto, appearing *in toto* at the beginning of both the development and the coda, but otherwise resisting development.⁷³ It might thus be construed as an ideal to which the more mundane “cockney” theme aspires, and which it finally achieves in the coda. Yet the hermeneutic implications of this are disturbing. As we have noted above, the ideal citizen in an early twentieth-century city was probably not the noble, charitable Londoner Elgar envisaged, but instead one who had withstood the pressures of the metropolis and survived to be the “fittest”: a wealthier, more successful version of the cockney, who had managed to maintain his/her sense of individuality in the face of overwhelming social forces. But to survive, let alone succeed, in the city meant fully to embrace social Darwinism; to preserve one’s individuality was, as Simmel noted, to devalue the world, one’s self, or both. Consequently the apotheosis of the “citizen” theme in the coda, instead of celebrating Elgar’s high-minded vision of civic responsibility, might be more accurately constructed as an affirmation of individualism achieved on the city’s own ignoble terms.

The theme appears in its entirety at three places in the overture: figures 3, 11 and 39. The first of these, the C-major statement (Example 5(i)), is relatively brief—the “citizen” theme gives way to the opening theme after just ten measures—but the subsequent statements are much longer. The passage at figure 11 (Example 5(ii)) comprises a statement of the theme for string quartet in a high register, marked

pianissimo. It begins in the local dominant, B-flat major, ascends sequentially in thirds to V/V (F major) at 12:1, and then descends sequentially, again in thirds, to a $ii^6_5-V^4_3-I$ cadence in E-flat at 13. In the final statement of the theme, at figure 39 (Example 5(iii)), this passage is reiterated a perfect fifth lower, fully scored: it begins in E-flat major, ascends to B-flat major, and descends in thirds to a D-flat major triad at 39:13 that, following the earlier passage at figure 12:7, would seem to be IV/Ab. With tonal sleight of hand, however, the D-flat triad is revealed as bII/C, and, with a Neapolitan cadence, the music returns to C major for the last five measures of the piece, which, as Evans puts it, “bring us back to earth” after the “glorification of the ‘citizen’ theme.”⁷⁴

Yet what divides these two later passages—key, dynamic range and orchestration—is arguably more important than the melodic and harmonic progression that unites them. The delicate string scoring of 11ff. and the tentative syncopation in the lower parts at 12:1 suggest a personality (both musical and non-musical) that is struggling to assert itself in the face of the activity around it, but whose identity is affirmed by the cadence at 13. Consequently, we might hear this section as a possible reconciliation between individual and city, one in which the citizen maintains his individuality, expressed musically by a I-V-I prolongation in E-flat. By contrast, there is no apparent identity crisis at the fully scored, *fortissimo* statement of the theme at figure 39ff.; yet as this later passage reaches its end, its musical gestures begin to overreach themselves in ways that feel excessive. We can see this in Elgar’s treatment of meter. In both statements, the “citizen” theme is liquidated by a quasi-3/4 cross-rhythm (beginning at figures 12:3 and 39:9 respectively), but whereas in the earlier passage the cross-rhythm dissolves untroubled into the closing cadence, in the coda it feels exaggerated, first by the

allargando at 39:12 and then by the aural *rallentando* of the 3/2 measure at 39:13. Indeed, the cadence itself feels forced: the accents and *sf* markings in 39:13 brashly underline the Neapolitan progression as if to stress the inherent artificiality of returning to the tonic in this way. There is little sense here that the two main keys of the piece have been properly reconciled with each other; instead, we are left with the impression that the ideal citizen (expressed in a suitably heroic E-flat major) has ultimately been swallowed up by the sheer power of the city (expressed in C major).

Once again, the hermeneutic implications of this are problematic. If the “citizen” theme expresses the ideal of the free citizen, one whose individuality has withstood the pressures of urban life, it would appear that that ideal is at best transitory and romanticized, and at worst unattainable.⁷⁵ Only when the theme is stated very softly, as at figure 11ff., can the illusion of an ideal survive; when it is stated *fortissimo* at figure 39ff., the ideal is crushed by the hard-nosed opening theme, suggesting the ultimate dominance over the citizen of the impersonal, even oppressive heteronomy that is the city.⁷⁶ Moreover, the unexpectedly rapid return to C major seemingly indicates just how easily this dominance could be enforced, and how evanescent (not to say false) any sense of individual autonomy might be. But perhaps the fate of the “citizen” theme was inevitable from the outset, for its tonal foundations were always shaky: there is only one perfect authentic cadence in the theme throughout the work (at 39:14); the inner-part movement is consistently chromatic; and there are few root position chords. In these respects it differs markedly from, for example, the military march, with its root position tonic and dominant chords. Whereas the march is the musical expression of a faith in militarism that unites people of all classes, however, the “citizen” theme presupposes a

divided society whose members are in perpetual competition with each other. The “noble” Londoner lies uneasily beneath the self-made crown that he wears, as it were; the social fluidity that brought him this “nobility” could just as easily destroy him in favor of another aspiring cockney. This sense of struggle is apparent, too, in the closing measures of the piece, where the pounding C-G quavers of the solo timpani recall the opening of another piece imbued with social Darwinist values, Strauss’s *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Indeed, the fact that *Cockaigne* is in the “nature”-key of *Zarathustra*, C major, suggests that these values are not human constructions, but unalterable facts, with which a citizen would somehow have to cope. And as in Strauss’s work it is these “natural” values that get the last word.

Conclusion: resisting a new myth

To summarize, then: English critics of *Cockaigne* have generally seen in the overture a depiction of a London which, in some respects, is as unlike a modern city as possible—relatively small, homogeneous rather than diverse, and socially unified rather than divided. This interpretation is implicitly nationalist: it constructs a sense of Englishness which transcends town, country and social class, and which is underpinned by popular support for militarily enforced imperialism (which itself escapes critique). And it is an interpretation that, over time, has achieved an almost mythical status. By contrast, the reading I have outlined above lays bare the ideologies at the heart of urban life to reveal an overture about a modern, even postmodern, city, one whose diversity, disorder and destabilizing power subverts the Romantic grand narrative of the triumphant autonomous artist-hero (or, in this case, citizen-hero).⁷⁷ Moreover, given Hehemann’s reference to a

“world city,” one might even perceive *Cockaigne* as a representation of the metropolis in general, rather than specifically of London: an anti-nationalist (or, at least, non-nationalist) alternative to traditional readings that have emphasized local London color.⁷⁸ But an attendant danger with this (or any) revisionist reading is that it, too, risks becoming mythologized. It is therefore important that a “dystopian” interpretation of *Cockaigne* should itself remain open to critique, not only in order to prevent hermeneutic closure, but also to raise questions about the processes and conditions through which we comprehend the work.⁷⁹ There are many different ways of doing this, but, in bringing this article to a close, I shall suggest just two.

The first concerns the implications in Hehemann’s critique of how we conceive of nationalism in music. In the early twentieth century, musical nationalism was necessarily non-German: the *lingua franca* of music was German, and the greatest German composers were considered exemplars who might be emulated but never surpassed.⁸⁰ Non-German composers were therefore forced either to imitate existing German styles (in which case they laid themselves open to the charge of unoriginality) or make use of national idioms (in which case their work seemingly lacked some of the “universal” qualities of German music).⁸¹ These national idioms took a variety of forms, most commonly folksongs and folk dances (which suggested that, as with contemporary political nationalism, the musical essence of a nation lay in the countryside); but in some cases, as Carl Dahlhaus has observed, the idioms were induced from a composer’s personal style.⁸² Whatever the form they took, however, they proved popular with critics and audiences alike: not only did they provide local color, but they offered proof that a

composer had remained true to the culture of his native land (even if, in the case of the “induced” idioms, this proof was somewhat circular).

As a composer who eschewed the use of folk music, but who is nevertheless popularly identified with musical “Englishness,” Elgar is a good example of a composer with an “induced” national idiom. Nevertheless, it is striking that several of his German critics detected in his music an “Englishness” that was situated in the countryside: Hugo Conrat made much of Elgar’s connection with the Malverns, while Fritz Volbach argued that Elgar belonged to an English artistic tradition, inspired by nature, that included landscape painters like Gainsborough, Constable and, above all, Turner.⁸³ In writing that Elgar’s music was “rooted in his national character, whose soul in turn is sometimes quite astonishingly reflected in his music,” Hehemann, too, hints at the familiar portrayal of a nationalist composer springing forth from the rural soil of his native land. But he then gives this construction an urban twist. The land whose soul Elgar reflected so vividly was no rural backwater but one “which has for centuries dedicated itself with dogged energy and will to the power of politics, industry and trade, and found its satisfaction in this”—in short, a nation whose values were those of the modern city.⁸⁴ Moreover, none of the works that Hehemann considers at this point to be Elgar’s greatest—*The Dream of Gerontius*, *King Olaf*, “Enigma” and the “Pomp and Circumstance” marches, as well as *Cockaigne*—suggest that English music was, at heart, rural.⁸⁵ Consequently, we have to consider that an “urban” reading of *Cockaigne*, rather than suggest an absence of nationalism, might indicate a specifically modern, civic, type of nationalism, based, as Michael Ignatieff has observed, on those “who subscribe to the nation’s political creed” and which “envisages the nation as a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united

in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values,” rather than a more reactionary ethnic nationalism in which it is “the national community which defines the individual, not the individuals who define the national community.”⁸⁶ Because nationalism can take many forms, we need constantly to negotiate its meanings and implications if it is to be of use in interpreting pieces of music or the critical discourse thereon. And not the least quality of *Cockaigne* is that it forces us to undertake such a negotiation.

The second point concerns how the narratives of *Cockaigne* intersect with our role as listeners. Whether as concert-goers or as purchasers of recorded sound, we are participants in the discourse that lies at the heart of the overture: the consumption of culture. The narrative of the overture, and particularly the “citizen” theme, might therefore be read as our own narrative, one where we attempt to construct and affirm our cultural values. As was the case with the citizen-hero, however, this proves no easy task. Are these values primarily those of high culture (the “citizen” theme) or popular culture (the military march)? However much we might assume the former, the overpowering nature of the military march might indicate otherwise. Indeed, to differentiate between high and low culture at all might seem arbitrary in a work governed by simultaneity; there is surely a case for arguing that in its diversity *Cockaigne* has more in common with the multilayered polyphony of Mahler’s later works, where the juxtaposition of highbrow and lowbrow topics forms an essential part of the musical argument, than with the idealism of (for instance) Elgar’s own First Symphony. And what of the ending? In the interpretation outlined above, the closing measures suggest that the ideal citizen is ultimately crushed by the higher authority of the city; for an ideal listener, the implication

would appear to be that our cultural values are similarly at the mercy of (and therefore constructed by) the musical text. (Put another way, our values might be said to reflect our listening habits, not vice versa.) Thus to comprehend *Cockaigne* is not simply to propose a particular hermeneutic reading of it: it is to acknowledge that the way we listen to the piece reflects how we approach culture in general—and that an awareness of this may bring about a transformation in that approach.

Figure 1.

SECTION	REHEARSAL FIGURE	THEME	KEY	THEME ASSOCIATION
Exposition	Opening 3 4:7 5 7 9	First subject Transition Second subject Codetta	C C→Eb Eb	City Citizen Lovers Cockney City → Lovers
Development space (the 'development' in <i>Cockaigne</i> consists of two episodes of mostly new material)	11 13 14 17 19 21 23 24	 Episode 1 (military march) Episode 2 (church)	Bb→F→ Eb Eb Eb→Gb→ Bb Bb Bb→Eb→F F/Gb Db Db→F→C	Citizen Lovers Military march (fade in) Military march Military march (fade out, plus Cockney, City) Military march (Salvation Army distortion) Church Church (plus

				City, Lovers)
Recapitulation	25	First subject	C	City
	30	Transition		
	31	Second subject		Lovers
	34			Cockney
	36			Military march (fade in)
	37			Military march
	39	Coda	Eb	Citizen
	39:14		C	City

Figure 2.

DEDICATED TO MY MANY FRIENDS
THE MEMBERS OF
BRITISH ORCHESTRAS.

COCKADE

(IN LONDON TOWN)
OVERTURE
FOR
FULL ORCHESTRA
COMPOSED BY
Edward Elgar
OP. 40

BOOSEY & COMPANY.
295 REGENT ST.
9 EAST SEVENTEENTH

LONDON W. &
ST. NEW YORK.

The cover is framed by a border of small illustrations. The top row shows St. Paul's Cathedral, a knight on horseback, and a clock tower. The middle row shows a soldier with a drum, a man in a hat, and a building. The bottom row shows a marching band, a soldier with a drum, and a soldier with a rifle.

NOTES

Earlier versions of this article have been presented at the Sixty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society (Houston, 2003), and in seminar papers at the University of Oxford (1999), University College, Dublin (2004), and Queen's University, Belfast (2004). The author also wishes to thank Byron Adams, Peter Franklin and Julian Johnson for their help and advice.

¹ Shortly before the premiere, in a letter to Joseph Bennett, Elgar wrote: "You know I don't believe in symphonic poems at all but I don't mind a 'Name' for a piece," quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984; hereafter "*ECL*"), 345. At least one early reviewer, however, claimed that there was a program to the overture, and that "it seemed unfair to try to judge the [music] merely from a purely abstract point of view." See "Dr. Elgar's New Overture," *Musical Times* 42 (July 1901), 472.

² "The question of programme music," undated MS fragment at the Elgar Birthplace, quoted in Moore, *ECL*, 342.

³ Edwin Evans, jnr., Introduction to analysis of Edward Elgar, *Cockaigne (In London Town), Concert Overture, op. 40* (London: Hawkes, 1942). Other critics denote the theme variously as the "London" theme (Ernest Newman, *Elgar* (London: John Lane, 1904), 156, 160), the "Londoner" theme (Max Hehemann, "Edward Elgar," *Die Musik* 2/7 (January 1903), 15-25 (p. 24)), and the "Guildhall" theme (Moore, *ECL*, 342).

⁴ Evans, Introduction.

⁵ Letter to Jaeger, 4 November 1900, *Elgar and his Publishers: Letters of a Creative Life*, vol. 1, 1885-1903, ed. Jerrold Northrop Moore (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 254;

letter to Richter, August 1901, quoted in Robert Anderson, *Elgar* (London: Dent, 1993), 304.

⁶ Jaeger, letter to Alice Elgar, 7 September 1900, in *Elgar and his Publishers* vol. 1, 255; Joseph Bennett, *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 June 1901, quoted in Moore, *ECL*, 349; Newman, *Elgar*, 155. Charles Booth (1840-1916) wrote *Life and Labour of the People in London* (London: Macmillan, 1892-1897), a path-breaking examination of the poverty of London's East End; Phil May (1864-1903) was an artist and cartoonist, best known for such light-hearted volumes as *Phil May's guttersnipes* (1896) and *Mr. Punch awheel: the humours of motoring and cyclist* (London, 1898).

⁷ “‘Somewhere Farther North’: Echoes of the Morecambe Festival,” *Musical Times* 44 (July 1903), 460; Edward Elgar, *A Future for English Music and other lectures*, ed. Percy M. Young (London: Dennis Dobson, 1968), 53, 284. See also Aidan J. Thomson, “Elgar’s Critical Critics,” in *Edward Elgar and His World*, ed. Byron Adams (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 193-222 (p. 205).

⁸ Brian Trowell, “Elgar’s Use of Literature,” in *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature*, ed. Raymond Monk (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1993), 182-326 (p. 225).

⁹ Thomson, as Trowell points out, was an atheist, and a melancholic alcoholic; see Trowell, “Elgar’s Use of Literature,” 227. Diana McVeagh suggests that the pessimism of the poem helped bring out not only Elgar’s doubts about his faith, but also his suicidal tendencies; see Diana McVeagh, “‘A Man’s Attitude to Life’,” in *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature*, 1-9 (pp. 7-8).

¹⁰ Moore, *ECL* 340-1, 346; I have paraphrased Moore’s summary of the poem.

¹¹ Letter to Richter, 1 April 1901, quoted in Moore, *ECL*, 346; italics added. Trowell argues that the presence of “Meteless & monelees” was nothing more than an “ironic parallel with Langland’s own awakening,” using the geniality and nobility of Elgar’s overture as evidence (Trowell, “Elgar’s Use of Literature,” 225).

¹² Moore, *ECL*, 339. Cf. the Cambridge degree ceremony at which Elgar received his honorary doctorate on 22 November 1900: the university’s public orator referred explicitly to “Malvern and its Hills” as “the cradle of British arts, the citadel fortified by Caractacus” (ibid., 337). For more on the “renaissance” set of critics and composers, their often frosty response to Elgar’s works, and the reasons behind this, see Thomson, “Elgar’s Critical Critics.”

¹³ Letter to Jaeger, 4 November 1900, *Elgar and his Publishers*, vol. 1, 254.

¹⁴ Adna Ferrin Weber, *The Growth of the Cities in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Statistics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1899), 442.

¹⁵ Max Simon Nordau, *Degeneration*, translated from the second edition of the German work (New York: D. Appleton, 1895), 35.

¹⁶ Quoted in Adna Weber, *The Growth of the Cities*, 370, 369.

¹⁷ Anthony Sutcliffe, *Towards the Planned City: Germany, Britain, the United States and France 1780-1914* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 62-3.

¹⁸ Ibid., 69-70, 56; Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961), 504.

¹⁹ Quoted in Adna Weber, *The Growth of the Cities*, 474.

²⁰ Max Weber, *The City*, trans. and ed. Don Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958), 92.

²¹ Adna Weber, *The Growth of the Cities*, 429.

²² Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson), 73.

²³ In the German census of 1882, the percentage of “liberal professionals” resident in cities was 10.7, as opposed to just 2.3 in rural areas; the corresponding figures for casual laborers were 5 and 0.7 percent respectively (Adna Weber, *The Growth of the Cities*, 315).

²⁴ Sutcliffe, *Towards the Planned City*, 40-1.

²⁵ Rupert Brooke, “V. The Soldier” in *1914 and Other Poems*, with a note on the text by Michael Schmidt, (London: Penguin, 1999), 7.

²⁶ Oswald Spengler, translated by Charles Francis Atkinson, *The Decline of the West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928; 2 vols.), quoted by Don Martindale, “Prefatory Remarks” to *The City*, by Max Weber, 36.

²⁷ J.F. Porte, *Sir Edward Elgar* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and co., 1921), 88; Thomas Dunhill, *Sir Edward Elgar* (London: Blackie, 1938), 92.

²⁸ Newman, *Elgar*, 159.

²⁹ Moore, *ECL*, 342-5.

³⁰ Although there are similarities between some of these themes—the two-note pick-up of the “citizen” theme also features in the “city” theme and the military march, for instance—Moore’s claim that the second subject was “close” to the “citizen” theme is unsubstantiated; both here and elsewhere (the connection between the first subject and the military march, for instance) any resemblance is primarily one of mood or, at most, melodic contour.

³¹ See, for instance, Susan McClary, “Narrative Agendas in ‘Absolute’ Music: Identity and Difference in Brahms’s Third Symphony,” in *Musicology and Difference*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 326-44.

³² Natural imagery and metaphors are common in Hanslick’s writings on organicism in music, e.g. “Since the composition follows formal laws of beauty, it does not improvise itself in haphazard ramblings but develops itself in organically distinct gradations, like sumptuous blossoming from a bud.” See Eduard Hanslick, *On The Musically Beautiful*, translated and edited by Geoffrey Payzant (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1986), 81.

³³ Elgar’s apparent reluctance to confront issues of social class conflict in *Cockaigne* is supported by the fact that the portrayal of the “cockney” as a diminution of the “citizen” theme was intended to depict youth, after Wagner’s apprentices in *Die Meistersinger* or the escort of Delibes’s *Sylvia*, rather than working-class London; see Moore, *ECL*, 345.

³⁴ Moore, *ECL*, 345.

³⁵ Moore’s own nostalgic, ruralist biases are well summarized by David Cannadine, who claims that he “emerges as a man deeply into nostalgia, disillusioned by the darkening experience of contemporary living, disenchanted by present-day cults of speed and success, preferring England to America and Worcestershire to London”; see David Cannadine, *The Pleasures of the Past* (London: Collins, 1989), 127, quoted in Matthew Riley, *Edward Elgar and the Nostalgic Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 13. Riley himself offers a thoughtful critique of the relationship between Elgar and nature—or at least the relationship between Elgar and nature that Moore and other critics have imposed on the composer—in *Edward Elgar and the Nostalgic Imagination*, particularly chapter 4 (pp. 81-113).

³⁶ This is Elgar's own quotation, one of several literary definitions of "Cockaigne" that he noted when composing the piece; another was Florio's "land of all delights: so taken in mockerie." See Moore, *ECL*, 342.

³⁷ Sutcliffe, *Towards the Planned City*, 62.

³⁸ Quoted in Mumford, *The City in History*, 561; Charles Baudelaire, "Le Peintre de la vie moderne" in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Y.-G. Le Bantec and Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), 1163, quoted in Christopher Butler, *Early Modernism: Literature, Music and Painting in Europe 1900-1916* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 133.

³⁹ Among other contemporary German-speaking critics, Hugo Conrat wrote admiringly of the way that Elgar "paints kaleidoscopically a number of episodes in the life of the capital, employing all orchestral effects" ("eine Anzahl Episoden aus dem Leben der Weltstadt kaleidoskopisch unter Auswendung aller orchestralen Effekte in Tönen zu malen versteht"), but did not go into greater detail than that; see Hugo Conrat, "Edward Elgar," *Neue Musikzeitung* 24/4 (8 January 1904), 51-2 (p. 51). Fritz Volbach made no reference to *Cockaigne* in either of the two articles he wrote about Elgar for *Allgemeine Musikzeitung* and the Catholic journal *Hochland*; indeed Volbach was under the impression that London was much smaller than it really was (see letter from Elgar to Jaeger, 16 December 1904, *Edward Elgar and his Publishers*, vol. 2, 601). For more on Elgar's German critics, see Aidan J. Thomson, "Elgar in German criticism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Edward Elgar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), ed. Daniel M. Grimley and Julian Rushton, 204-13.

⁴⁰ Hehemann, "Edward Elgar," 23-4: "das Treiben der modernen Grossstadt in Tönen festzuhalten"; "es ist die Musik der Weltstadt, die wir da vernehmen, des ungeheuren

Millionencentrums, der Stadt der Arbeit und des Business”; “Die Londoner sind keine Phäaken, sie sind nicht bequem und zu behaglicher Würde angethan, eifrig vielmehr, thätig und selbstbewusst.” Hehemann’s reference to Phaeacians, in Homer’s *Odyssey* a friendly and hospitable (but by no means aggressively hedonistic) people, is slightly curious.

⁴¹ Ibid., 23: “wenn man [...] behaupten könnte, er mische sich mitten unter das Volk.”

⁴² Ibid., 23: “verblüffend realistisch”; “könnte man von Elgar sagen er bringe das Volk selbst aufs Podium.”

⁴³ My choice of analogy here is not fortuitous: as Christopher Butler has observed, photography was particularly well suited to the montage techniques that were often used in early modernist representations of urban experiences. See Butler, *Early Modernism*, 134.

⁴⁴ Meirion Hughes and Robert Stradling, *The English Musical Renaissance 1840-1940: Constructing a national music*, 2nd edn. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 167, 174. Interestingly Parry admired *Cockaigne*, describing it as a “brilliant piece of work and quite up to date,” though whether his comment that it was “[e]ven circus music at time” was intended as a compliment is a moot point (diary entry, 20 June 1901, quoted in Jeremy Dibble, *C. Hubert H. Parry: His Life and Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 383).

⁴⁵ F. G[ilbert] W[ebb], “Notizien: London,” *Zeitschrift der internationalen Musikgesellschaft* (hereafter “ZIMG”) 7/1 (October 1905), 27-8 (p. 28).

⁴⁶ Both critics are quoted by Charles Maclean in “Notizien: London,” *ZIMG* 9/6 (March 1908), 224-5 (p. 225).

⁴⁷ Mumford, *The City in History*, 531.

⁴⁸ Georg Simmel, translated, edited and introduction by Kurt H. Wolff, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1950), 409.

⁴⁹ Martindale, “Prefatory remarks,” 33.

⁵⁰ For an example of a “non-material”—or, at least, non-tangible—experience, see Lawrence Kramer, “Consuming the Exotic,” in *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 203ff. Kramer argues that the aesthetic experience of listening to Ravel’s *Daphnis et Chloe* was as representative of *fin-de-siècle* Paris’s taste for consuming the exotic as, for instance, buying an oriental rug from a department store.

⁵¹ Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, 415.

⁵² Quoted in Butler, *Early Modernism*, 140: “L’espace n’est à personne. Et nul être n’a réussi à s’approprier un morceau d’espace pour le saturer de son existence unique. Tout s’entre-croise, coïncide, cohabite. Chaque pont sert de perchoir à mille oiseaux.”

⁵³ Cf. the early Modernist technique of “Simultaneism” in poetry, which combined the interpenetration of simultaneously occurring events with skepticism about the nature of personal identity: the narrative is not that of a single person’s diachronic experiences, but one which goes beyond the stream of consciousness to an (imagined) collective unconscious. See Butler, *Early Modernism*, 158-9, particularly his discussion of montage techniques in Blaise Cendrars’ *Prose du Transsibérien* (1912-14), 159-62.

⁵⁴ It appeared for seven measures at figure 20 (first *pp*, and then *p*), between the cockney “fade out” of the military march and the Salvation Army band music at figure 21.

⁵⁵ Hehemann, “Edward Elgar”, 24-5: “[D]ringen von ferne ein paar Töne der Militärmusik herüber, und schon giebt’s wieder ein Rennen und Jagen, alles was Beine hat, kommt heran. Nun zieht die Musik vorbei, hinter ihr die liebe Jugend.”

⁵⁶ Porte, *Sir Edward Elgar*, 88; Basil Maine, *Elgar: His Life and Works* (Trowbridge: Redwood Press, 1933), vol. 2, 197. Maine even went so far as to claim that these “virtues” had been “re-affirmed and re-established” by the economic crises of the early 1930s (*ibid.*, vol. 2, 307-8).

⁵⁷ Evans, Introduction.

⁵⁸ *The Times* reported a “demonstration of popular enthusiasm” in London on the night of 18 May 1900 as the news of the relief of Mafeking became public knowledge, characterized by masses of people “waving flags and shouting themselves hoarse,” “a deafening outburst of shouting, cheering, and singing,” and from “about 9 30, till midnight, the strains of the National Anthem, ‘Rule Britannia,’ and ‘Soldiers of the Queen’ occasionally rising from one quarter or another above the incessant tumult of thousands of voices. Every kind of noisy instrument that could be obtained was brought out and exercised to its loudest capacity, from tin whistles and rudimentary bull-roarers of barbaric appearance to drums and cornets.” Troops of men marched from the Mansion House to the West End, “and their jubilations were answered by cheering and the waving of flags from the tops of omnibuses and from cabs as well as the footpaths. The sight of anyone wearing her Majesty’s uniform was sufficient to provoke a spontaneous outburst of ‘God save the Queen’.” (*The Times*, 19 May 1900, 12.) It is quite possible that the British soldiers at the foot of the title page of the full score of *Cockaigne* (see Figure 2

above) were part of a South African regiment. (I am indebted to Brian Trowell for this suggestion.)

⁵⁹ It should also be noted, however, that Evans wrote his introduction in the middle of World War Two, which might explain both his patriotism and the reference to a famous victory won against numerical odds; similarly, Maine's comments date from a period—the American stock market crash, and its knock-on effects in Britain—when a reaffirmation of national confidence was necessary.

⁶⁰ Hehemann, “Edward Elgar,” 25.

⁶¹ Evans, Introduction.

⁶² J.A. Hobson, *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism* (London: Walter Scott, 1894), 338-9, quoted in Adna Weber, *The Growth of the Cities*, 399.

⁶³ For more on street crime in Victorian London, see Donald Thomas, *The Victorian Underworld* (London: John Murray, 1998), chapter 2 (“The Dodgers and the Swell Mob”), 41-80, particularly 63-70.

⁶⁴ Hehemann, “Edward Elgar,” 24: “die nähere Bekanntschaft mit dem Mob erspart [Elgar] uns.” Cf. Jakob van Hoddis's poem, “Dem Bürger fliegt” (1911), which focussed on the simultaneity within the city of the trivial and the potentially catastrophic, and which, according to Christopher Butler, “marked the transition into a Modernist framework of ideas... for many German writers and artists.” See Butler, *Early Modernism*, 176.

⁶⁵ Hehemann, “Edward Elgar,” 25: “Das schwellt dem Londoner die Brust, und stolz erhebt sich sein Motiv zu einem Jubelgesang.”

⁶⁶ Ibid., 25: “da dringt uns aus der Kirche ernster Orgelklang entgegen, „Er und sie“ bekommen fromme Gedanken, aber die Jugend hat nicht viel dafür übrig, sie pfeift fidel drauf los und liefert damit einen schönen Kontrapunkt zu dem Gesange der Orgel.”

⁶⁷ Examples of this include the finales of Brahms’s First and Mahler’s Second Symphonies; that Elgar was familiar with the technique is shown by his chorale-like treatment of the “Nimrod” theme in the finale of the “Enigma” variations.

⁶⁸ Sutcliffe, *Towards the Planned City*, 5.

⁶⁹ Adna Weber, *The Growth of the Cities*, 442, 388.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 403.

⁷¹ Indeed, Weber complained that city charities merely precipitated “an influx of tramps and country good-for-nothings” (ibid., 420-1).

⁷² Mumford, *The City in History*, 546.

⁷³ Cf. the motto theme of the First Symphony, which, in the first movement, also reappears at these points.

⁷⁴ Evans, Introduction.

⁷⁵ Cf. Simmel’s contention that urban man could not really be free, at least materially: the specialization of the nineteenth-century economy “makes each man the more directly dependent upon the supplementary activities of all others” (Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, 409). Simmel also claimed that metropolitan man was “‘free’ in a spiritualized and refined sense, in contrast to the pettiness and prejudices which hem in the small-town man” (ibid., 418); but, as we have already seen, in other contexts he argued that the city might threaten rather than liberate the human spirit.

⁷⁶ In other words, the citizen is denied what Isaiah Berlin has termed “negative liberty,” namely freedom from coercion (as opposed to active liberty, or freedom to do). See Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty,” 118-72 of *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), especially 122-31.

⁷⁷ For that reason, I would argue that (to adapt Daniel Albright’s explanation of Poulenc’s originality) Elgar in *Cockaigne* is modernist “not in the way that his music sounds, but in the way that his music means,” and that this thereby calls into question J.P.E. Harper-Scott’s otherwise plausible claim that Elgar’s “modernist” period began in 1904 with *In The South*. See Daniel Albright, *Untwisting The Serpent* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 288; and J.P.E. Harper-Scott, *Edward Elgar, Modernist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 19.

⁷⁸ Although Hehemann’s synopsis includes remarks like “lässt [Elgar] uns die Bekanntschaft des Londoners machen” (“Elgar allows us to make the acquaintance of the Londoner”), it lacks the specific references often found among English writers on *Cockaigne* (e.g. Newman’s identification of the London park in the second subject as St. James’s). Consequently, there is not what, in a literary context, Benedict Anderson has called the “hypnotic confirmation of the solidity of a single community, embracing characters, author [or composer] and readers [or audience], moving onward through calendrical time.” For Anderson, local references help to create an “imagined” national community in the minds of a readership who recognizes them; the absence of such references in Hehemann’s account, however, reflects the fact that his article was intended for German readers whose knowledge of the British capital might have been limited. See

Hehemann, "Edward Elgar," 24; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and the Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 27.

⁷⁹ Cf. John Mowitt's observation, following Roland Barthes, that the "'plural' character of [a] text... has less to do with some bland notion of multiple meanings, than with an empowerment that enables our constructions to be ceaselessly challenged"; see John Mowitt, *Text: The Genealogy of an Antidisciplinary Object* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 41, quoted in Kevin Korsyn, *Decentering Music: A Critique of Contemporary Musical Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 40.

⁸⁰ Cf. Hugo Riemann's claim that "The complete picture of the musical world at the end of the century shows that Germany's musical supremacy over all countries that cultivate real art continues with unabated strength... for all countries, the 'greats' are the German masters Bach, Handel, Gluck, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Weber, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Wagner and Brahms. For one or another of one's own nationality to be equated with these greats is the highest thing to which the pride of other nations aspires." ("Das Gesamtbild der musikalischen Welt am Schlusse des Jahrhunderts zeigt die noch mit ungeschwächter Kraft pflegen... die „Grossen“ sind für alle Lande die deutschen Meister Bach, Händel, Gluck, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Weber, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Wagner und Brahms. Diesen Grossen einen oder den andern der eigenen Nationalität gleichzustellen, ist das Höchste, wozu sich der Stolz der anderen Nationen erhebt.") See Hugo Riemann, "Musikgeschichte: Schluss," in *Das goldene Buch der Musik* (Berlin and Stuttgart: W. Spemann, 1900), ed. Karl Grunsky *et al.*, §222.

⁸¹ The view that non-German music was inferior is well illustrated in the writings of Walter Niemann, for whom the main advantage of any fusion of German and foreign

music was that “die Erkenntnis des spezifisch Deutschen und Angestammten nur um so klarer wurde” (“the discovery of what was specifically German and inherited only became all the clearer”), and the main disadvantage that “als bei schwächeren oder unselbständigeren Talenten die Gefahr der Ausländerei heraufbeschwören wurde” (“in weaker or less original talents, the danger of foreign influence was evoked”). See Walter Niemann, “Die ausländische Klaviermusik der Gegenwart,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 72/7 (8 February 1905), 135-8 (p. 135).

⁸² “National style in music only arises when the personal style of a major composer is welcomed as the style of a nation, and this at a moment in history when the carrier stratum of a musical culture is demanding a musical expression or reflection of its nationalist political sentiments” (Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 217).

⁸³ Conrat’s article about Elgar draws heavily on F.G. Edwards’s anonymous article on the composer for the *Musical Times* in 1900 (“Edward Elgar”, *Musical Times* 41/692 (October 1900), 641-8). Like Edwards, Conrat begins with a description of the rolling hills of rural England, which “often lends the landscape a definite air of sub-Alpine mountains” (“der Landschaft oft einen ausgesprochenen Mittelgebirgscharakter verleihen”), whose valleys “since time immemorial have been sought out by pilgrims who want to enjoy the end of a busy life, far from the milling crowds of the cities, in God’s beautiful countryside” (“seit jeher von solchen Erdenpilgern aufgesucht werden, die den Abend eines thätigen Lebens, fern von dem Gewühle der Städte, in Gottes schöner Natur genießen wollen”), and whose musical credentials are established not only by Elgar, but by the fact that both Clementi and Jenny Lind died in the Malverns.

Conrat does not actually claim that Elgar embodied the English landscape in his music, but his choice of imagery is nevertheless revealing. See Hugo Conrat, "Edward Elgar," *Neue Musikzeitung* 24/4 (21 December 1903), 33-4 (p. 33); Fritz Volbach, "Edward Elgar," *Hochland* 5/1 (December 1907), 316-21 (pp. 316-17); and Thomson, "Elgar in German criticism," 212.

⁸⁴ Hehemann, "Edward Elgar," 16-17: "wurzelt in seinem Volkstum, dessen Seele sich wiederum manchmal ganz verblüffend in seiner Musik widerspiegelt"; "das sich seit Jahrhunderten mit zäher Energie und dem Willen zur Macht der Politik, der Industrie und dem Handel gewidmet hat und hierin seine Befriedigung fand."

⁸⁵ *Gerontius*, indeed, offered little indication about the essential qualities of English music at all, since, according to Hehemann, it was the work in which "Elgars Nationalität äusserlich am wenigsten aufgeprägt ist" ("Elgar's nationality has, superficially, left the least mark"); Hehemann, 'Edward Elgar', 17. In a later article, Hehemann praised the "kraftvollen Tonsprache und seinem nationalen Kolorit" ("powerful musical language and its national coloring") of *King Olaf*, but noted that neither this work nor any of Elgar's other early oratorios had achieved success outside England, an indication, perhaps, that their local color might be of only local interest; see Max Hehemann, "Edward Elgar", *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 72/40 (27 September 1905), 760-2 (p. 761).

⁸⁶ Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging* (London: BBC Books, 1993), 3-5.

Example 1.

The first system of the musical score is written in 4/4 time on a single staff. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' and the mood is 'Moderato'. The first measure contains a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B-flat4, with the instruction 'ff legato' below. The second measure contains a half note C5, a quarter note D5, and a half note E5, with a fermata over the E5. The third measure contains a half note F5, a quarter note G5, and a half note A5, with a fermata over the A5. The fourth measure contains a half note B-flat5, a quarter note C6, and a half note D6, with a fermata over the D6. The fifth measure contains a half note E6, a quarter note F6, and a half note G6, with a fermata over the G6. The sixth measure contains a half note A6, a quarter note B-flat6, and a half note C7, with a fermata over the C7. The seventh measure contains a half note D7, a quarter note E7, and a half note F7, with a fermata over the F7. The eighth measure contains a half note G7, a quarter note A7, and a half note B-flat7, with a fermata over the B-flat7. The system ends with a double bar line.

mf scherzando

Example 2.

Grandioso

Flute I
Flute II
Oboe I, II
Clarinet in Bb I, II
Bassoon I, II
Contrabassoon
I, II
Horn in F
III, IV
Trumpet in F I, II
Cornet in Bb I, II
Trombone I, II
Trombone III and Tuba
Timpani
Percussion
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

Grandioso

ff *sf* *f* *mf* *sfz* *cresc.* *decresc.* *nata forza* *arco* *Piaffo* *Trio* *Sleigh bells* *Tamburo Piccolo*

[illegible]

Example 3.

Example 3. Musical score for measures 24-28. The score is for a full orchestra and includes the following instruments:

- Flute
- Piccolo
- Oboe I, II
- Clarinet in B \flat I, II
- Bassoon I, II
- Contrabassoon
- Horn in F I, II
- Horn in F III, IV
- Trumpet in F I, II
- Trombone I, II
- Trombone III and Tuba
- Timpani
- Violin I
- Violin II
- Viola
- Violoncello
- Double Bass

The score is in 4/4 time and begins at measure 24. The key signature has two flats (B \flat and E \flat). The tempo/mood is marked "poco a poco accel." (poco a poco accel.). The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, pp, mf, f, cresc., decresc., ten.), articulation (acc., stacc., marc.), and phrasing (sch., scherz.). The score is divided into two systems, with measures 24-28 in the first system and measures 29-32 in the second system. The score is written for a full orchestra, including woodwinds, brass, percussion, and strings.

2

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Example 4 (continued).

This musical score page, labeled "Example 4 (continued)", covers measures 27 through 32. The instrumentation includes Flutes (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Contrabass (Cbn.), Horn (Hn.), Euphonium (E. Tpt.), Cor, Trombone (Tbn.), Bass Trombone (B. Tbn.), Tuba, Timpani (Timp.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.).

The score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Measure 27 begins with a rehearsal mark. The woodwinds and strings play complex, rhythmic patterns. The brass section, including the Horn, Euphonium, Cor, Trombone, Bass Trombone, and Tuba, enters in measure 28 with a powerful, sustained chord. The Violin I and II parts feature rapid sixteenth-note passages. The Viola and Violoncello parts provide a steady, rhythmic foundation. The Double Bass part plays a driving, eighth-note pattern. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo), *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *sf* (sforzando). There are also articulation marks like accents and slurs. The page concludes with a rehearsal mark at measure 32.

Example 5(i).

3 4

Flute

Piccolo

Oboe I, II

Clarinet in B \flat I, II

Bassoon I, II

Contrabassoon

Horn I, II

Horn in F III, IV

Trumpet in F I, II

Cornet in B \flat I, II

Trombone I, II

Trombone III and Tuba

Timpani

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

ff *legato* *f* *p* *sf* *arco* *sul G* *3* *4*

Example 5(ii).

11

Vln.1

Vln.2

dim. molto

dolcissimo

dim.

Cello

pp legato e dolce

Viola

Cello

12

cresc.

dim.

pp

13

dim.

39 Tempo, Nobilmente

Flute I, II

Oboe I, II

Clarinet in Bb I, II

Bassoon I, II

Contrabassoon

Horn I, II

Horn in F III, IV

Trumpet in F I, II

Cornet in Bb I, II

Trombone I, II

Trombone III and Tuba

Organ

Timpani

Percussion

Gr. Cassa

Tamb.

Cym.

39 Tempo, Nobilmente

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

Example 5 (iii), continued.

This musical score, titled "Example 5 (iii), continued," is a complex orchestral and percussion arrangement. It features a full orchestra with woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Contrabassoon), brass (Horn, Trumpet, Cor, Trombone, Bass Trombone, Tuba), strings (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass), and keyboard (Organ). The percussion section includes Timpani, Percussion, and various auxiliary instruments like Gong, Cymbals, and Toms.

The score is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a tempo marking of "allargando" and a dynamic of "dim." (diminuendo). The music is divided into measures, with some measures marked "a 2" (alla breve) and others "a tempo". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings (e.g., "ff", "f", "mf", "p", "dim", "cresc").

Key features of the score include:

- Tempo and Dynamics:** The score starts with "allargando" and "dim." and includes markings for "a 2" (alla breve) and "a tempo".
- Instrumentation:** The score is for a full orchestra and percussion, with parts for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Contrabassoon, Horn, Trumpet, Cor, Trombone, Bass Trombone, Tuba, Organ, Timpani, Percussion, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass.
- Notation:** The score uses standard musical notation, including notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings.
- Structure:** The score is divided into measures, with some measures marked "a 2" (alla breve) and others "a tempo".

EXAMPLE CAPTIONS

Example 1. Elgar, *Cockaigne*: main themes. (i) 'City' theme; (ii) 'Citizen' theme; (iii)

'Lovers' theme; (iv) 'Cockney' theme; (v) Military march.

Example 2. Elgar, *Cockaigne*: development space, end of military march.

Example 3. Elgar, *Cockaigne*: development space, end of church episode.

Example 4. Elgar, *Cockaigne*: beginning of recapitulation.

Example 5. Elgar, *Cockaigne*: appearances of the 'citizen' theme. (i) First appearance of

the 'citizen theme; (ii) Second appearance of the 'citizen theme; (iii) Third

appearance of the 'citizen theme.

FIGURE LEGENDS

Figure 1. Formal analysis of *Cockaigne*.

Figure 2. Title page of *Cockaigne* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, c. 1901).